(a) whether any assessment has been made by Government in respect of the number of skilled and unskilled labourers in the country;

(b) if so, the estimated number of skilled and unskilled labourers in the country by the end of the year 2002;

(c) whether Government have set any programme to increase the number of skilled labourers in the Tenth Five Year Plan period; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and what would be the number of skilled labourers by the end of Tenth Five Year Plan period?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) and (b) Skilled labour force was around 6—8 per cent of the total labour force of 406 million in the year 1999-2000.

(c) and (d) Improvement in the skill training of the work force is a continuous process. Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) introduce new Trades from time to time and discontinue the obsolete ones to keep pace with the changing pattern of demand for the skill in the Labour Market. Ministry of Labour has launched a special drive to expand vocational training facilities in the country by utilizing the available infrastructural facilities in recognized schools, polytechnics etc. in second shift.

Review Committee on functioning of ESI Corporation

1024. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Review Committee appointed by Government for functioning of Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has since submitted its report;

(b) whether aforesaid Committee has concluded that there is tremendous dissatisfaction with the scheme among the employees;

(c) if so, what remedial measures are being taken by Government;

(d) whether Government propose to moot out higher wage ceiling for admissibility of ESI scheme; and

(e) if so, what are Government's plans?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) to (c) A Committee was set up in August, 2002 by the Government of India under the Chairmanship of Shri M.C. Verma to review the working of the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC). The Committee has since submitted its report on 30.1.2003. It has, *inter-alia*, recommended to enhance the coverage of ESIC, extension of ESI Scheme to unorganised sector workers, increase in the wage ceiling for coverage of the scheme, raising of the ceiling on expenditure, that the concept of Model Hospitals should be vigorously pursued, that there should be computerization and simplification of procedures. The Committee has made comprehensive study of the ESI Scheme and suggested methods for its improvements; which have to be examined by the ESI Corporation for their implementation.

(d) and (e) No, Sir.

Labour Reforms

1025. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering any proposal for embarking upon a massive plan of labour reforms;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether various political parties and the State Governments as also representatives of the trade union organisations have been consulted in the matter; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) and (b) Review/updation of labour laws is a continuous process in order to bring them in tune with the prevailing situation and emerging needs of the economy. Taking into consideration the requirement of productivity, competitiveness, employment generation and to update the provisions of labour laws, a need has been felt to make amendments